

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN
THE LIGHT OF MOD-
ERN SCHOLARSHIP.

Inaugural Address of the
Rev. Joseph J. Lampe, D.D., Ph.D.,
as Professor of Old Testament Literature
and Exegesis.

OMAHA THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY,

SEPTEMBER 22, 1896.

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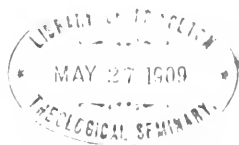
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INAUGURATION

OF THE

REV. JOSEPH J. LAMPE, D.D., PH.D.

AS

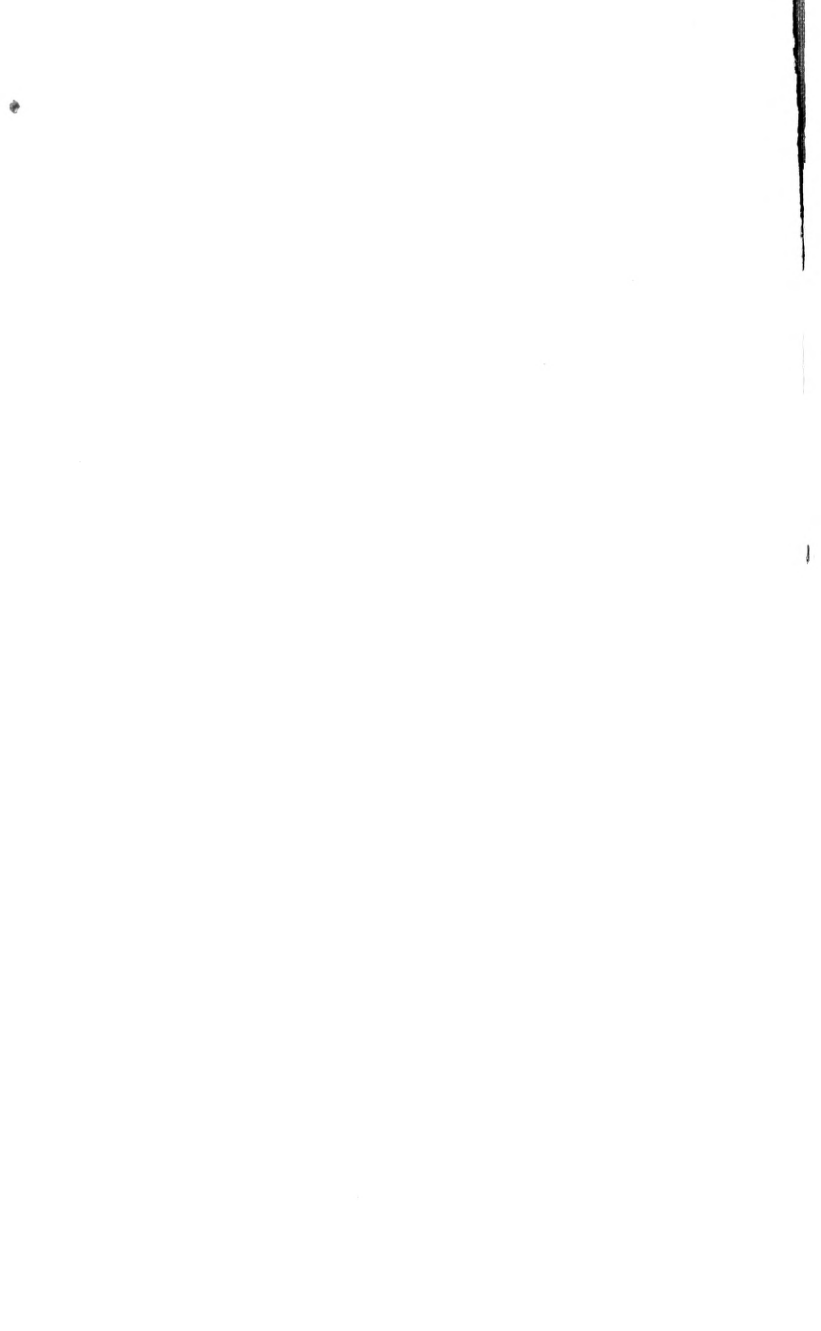
PROFESSOR

OF

OLD TESTAMENT LITERATURE
AND EXEGESIS.

OMAHA:

A. L. STONECYPHER, PRINTER.
1896.



PROGRAM OF EXERCISES
IN CONNECTION WITH THE
Inauguration of Rev. Joseph J. Lampe, D.D., Ph.D.

...AS...

Professor of O. T. Literature and Exegesis
IN THE
Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, Neb.

First Presbyterian Church,

Sept. 22, 1896.

Organ.

Hymn No. 292.

Scripture—Psalm 19.

Anthem.

Prayer.

Subscription.

Charge.

READS McCORMICK, President Board of Directors

Anthem—Choir.

Inaugural Address.

DR. J. J. LAMPE.

Hymn No. 290.

Benediction.



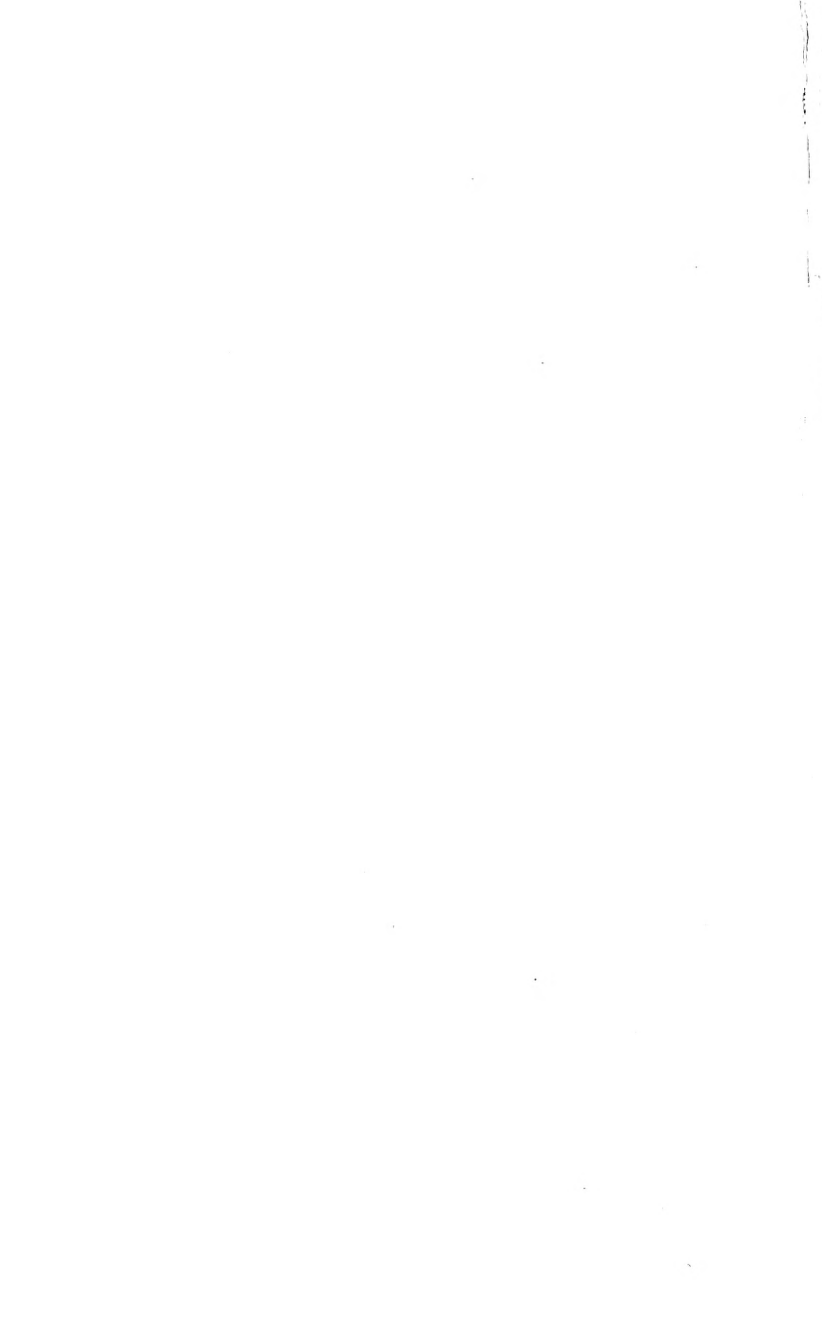
∴ ERRATA ∴

- Page 4 On the twenty-second line from the top, between "word" and "during," insert, "to His people."
- Page 8 On fourth line from the top, read "Lachish" for "Lachisch."
- Page 10 In footnote 3, on fourth line from the bottom, read "assuring" for "ussuring."
- Page 18 On seventeenth line from the bottom, read "supernatural" for "spiritual."
- Page 27 On sixth line from the bottom, read "trials" for "lessons."

THE CHARGE

BY

THE REV. S. B. McCORMICK.



THE CHARGE.

MY BROTHER:

It is impossible for me to escape the feeling that it is somewhat presumptuous for me to attempt to charge you concerning the duties of your Chair. Nor could I at all venture upon the task, were it not that some one must do it, and by the direction of the Board the duty has been assigned to me.

The Chair which you have this evening formally assumed in this Seminary, is a most ancient and honorable one, and has a most distinguished history. So far as we know, the prophet Samuel organized the first Theological Seminary, and surely his Chair therein was that of Hebrew Literature and Exegesis. From that time until now, doubtless with very few and very brief intervals, this important Chair has continued to be occupied; for in the instruction given in connection with the Jewish synagogues, and in the later schools of Alexandria and Antioch, in the cloisters of the Middle Ages, and in the schools and seminaries of modern times, the study of ancient Scripture has ever been preserved.

You, my brother, are called to deal with the oldest part of Holy Scripture—that which formed our Lord's Bible, and which was the source whence the Apostles drew their proofs of the divine mission of Christ. It has therefore had, from the very beginning, an abiding and secure place in the history and development of the Christian Church. It is not alone the book in which is found the germ of human redemption, and the prophecy of a Saviour and the history of the people who were to become the custodians of God's revelation, and from whom should spring the world's Redeemer; but, as is eloquently shown by George Adam Smith in a recent address in Chicago, in which he emphasized the service which the Old Testament has rendered in the education of the human race, it is the book which, inspired of God, has

itself inspired men to become great men and great preachers and great reformers and great law-givers in the later centuries of the world's history. Mighty men have drunk deeply at its pure and healthful fountains and have used the ancient Scripture as a means of elevating public morals, securing the rights of the people and directing upward, along holy and righteous lines, the streams of civilization; and this because they have "caught in it the authentic accents of the word of God, enforcing not only his law, but a very full and clear revelation of his character and his ways with men."

In your department of instruction you will be compelled to face questions which reach to the very heart of revelation, and which affect both the fact and the possibility thereof. For many years the New Testament was bitterly attacked by hostile critics who invented countless theories to account for the existence of the various books on other than natural grounds. A tithe of the ingenuity thus displayed, applied to mechanics, would have revolutionized the industrial world. In this battle, which raged furiously for many years, the critics were at last silenced and the New Testament stood forth, in clearer and stronger light, as a book of absolute and unquestioned authority. In this conflict the defenders of the truth discovered the necessity, first of all, of settling the text itself. What did God actually cause to be written? I do not say, for I do not know, that the defenders of the Old Testament against hostile attack, must first of all lay their foundation by settling the text, as was done in the New. The material for this is not sufficiently known; perhaps may never be discovered; indeed, may not even exist. But I am sure that many years of patient, laborious, painstaking, unappreciated work must be done along this line before the critics, by whatsoever name they are known, can reach conclusions which may be regarded as trustworthy. It is necessary not alone to perform the drudgery of scanning manuscripts and deciphering words and letters and dots and marks; but it

is also necessary to become familiar with other tongues related to the Hebrew, and with all the wealth of learning which throws light upon the history and literature of the Hebrew language. Already has archaeology made havoc with some of the dogmatic conclusions of men who deem their literary taste sufficiently trained to register results that are infallibly correct. Professor Sayce (whom I do not instance as in all respects a defender of orthodoxy; for he himself says that his work will satisfy neither the higher critics nor their extreme opponents) has given us some idea of the valuable results which archaeological data will furnish. The critics had determined, for example, that the word שֶׁמֶט was of late origin, and upon this had based an argument denying the early date of the Song of Songs. But a small hæmatite weight, found on the site of Samaria, and inscribed with letters of the eighth century B. C., and which is undoubtedly genuine, effectually routs the literary critics in this instance and absolutely disposes of their argument.

For myself, I cannot but think that a most fruitful field for study, one which will yield an abundant harvest, is that of paleography. The apparent discrepancies in the text, between the Hebrew and the Septuagint, which so perplex the careful student and send him out into the uncertain sea of speculation, may often be satisfactorily reconciled by the study of the forms of letters in particular centuries of long ago. While this may not yield all the student desires, yet it is perhaps a comparatively neglected field which if carefully worked may discover to us new domains for our exploration. We do not know what may be; but it is within the possibilities that, as in the New Testament, God gave new evidence just as men were faithful in working up to where it was needed; so, in the Old Testament, as men are faithful in opening up to light, all possible sources of knowledge, God will discover to us new facts, new manuscripts, new stones and inscriptions, whereby ultimate certainty may be had as to all these questions relating to Hebrew writ-

ings. The marvellous light thrown on these subjects in recent years, each time confirming Scripture, gives us ground for assured confidence that the history of the New Testament will find its repetition in that of the old, and that every attack upon the genuineness and truthfulness of the record will be triumphantly overthrown.

With all these questions, you, my brother, are thoroughly familiar through long years of devoted study. It is now your joy and delightful privilege to guide the students under your care into this wondrous field of beauty and knowledge. You will, of course, as the first step, without which the hidden riches can never be discovered, give these young men a thorough training in the study of the Hebrew language itself. This means for you, and for them, labor, even drudgery. But as you will see some of them rightly appreciating the strength and simplicity of the Hebrew tongue, which was honored of God in being made the medium for the revelation of himself in the grand old Hebrew religion, your reward will begin to come. These you will lead the deeper into the mystery and power of God's thought, as set forth in the forceful words of the rugged Hebrew prophets. And so, whatever progress any may make in the several fields of Old Testament study, you will put into their hands an instrument, whereby in after years they may for themselves enter in and explore the mines of wealth, and bring forth for themselves and their people precious things from the great store-house of God's marvellous revelation.

It is a lofty mission to which you have been called. In a little while you will begin to preach to many congregations, through those who go out from your instruction to proclaim the riches of God. May you be guided and kept in your work—the most important, perhaps, to which God calls his ministering servants. And the prayers of the Board and of the friends of the Seminary go with you.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE LIGHT
OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH J. LAMPE, D.D., PH.D

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AT
OMAHA, AND CHRISTIAN FRIENDS:

It is gratifying to me to become connected with this Seminary in its infancy and thus share in the privilege of helping to lay foundations on which, as we firmly believe, will be reared an institution of ever increasing usefulness in the Church of Christ. This pleasure is enhanced by the fact that the work to which you have called me is congenial to me. I regard it to be an honor also. No greater privilege can be accorded to one, who desires to devote his life to the accomplishment of the greatest possible good, than that of helping to train young men for the Gospel ministry and to qualify them to exert an influence among men for truth and righteousness and eternal life.

But looking at the responsibilities of my appointed work, I am deeply impressed with a sense of my own insufficiency and feel that, while thanking you for the honor conferred, I must also ask your prayers that I may ever have the needed grace and wisdom for a right discharge of the sacred duties which will devolve upon me.

An unusual interest centers at present in the Old Testament. Many of the problems which thoughtful men are revolving in their minds, directly concern the Hebrew Scriptures. These documents have something to say on such questions as cosmogony, biology, geology, ethnology and others, with all of which modern thought is earnestly grappling.

But the Old Testament is to-day invested with a special interest, owing to the antagonisms which it encounters. It has always been attacked by the enemies of a supernatural religion. It is the battlefield just now

upon which the advocates of a natural and supernatural origin of things are engaged in a life and death struggle."¹ A rationalistic criticism, in the name of scientific scholarship, claims to have demonstrated that the authenticity, the genuineness, the trustworthiness and plenary inspiration of the Old Testament books are no longer tenable, and therefore demands that they be modified or abandoned.

The proposition is revolutionary. Far-reaching consequences of a disastrous nature must result from conceding such a claim. For, to discredit the Old Testament discredits the New as well. If the Old Testament is not the word of God spoken by Moses and the prophets, then we have no assurance that He has spoken to us by His Son in the New. Those who undermine confidence in Moses and the prophets inevitably also destroy faith in Christ, since they testified of Him, and He endorsed them.

True, the New Testament has a light superior to that of the Old. The Old Testament does not contain that full and complete revelation of truth which we have in the New. But we are not warranted on that account to dispense with it. Notwithstanding the incompleteness of its revelation, it was God's truthful word during the Old Testament ages by which they were prepared, in process of time, for the reception of the more complete revelation of the New Testament, and will therefore always be true, and necessary also, as a guide for the correct understanding of the New.

The Old Testament is the foundation of the New, and hence its destruction involves that of the New also. If the Old Testament can be shown to be a conglomerate of fable and fiction, the New must sink into the same category. The two Testaments must stand or fall together. We assuredly believe that both will stand. The destructive criticism has not made a single breach in our strong citadel, but is itself so seriously damaged, by opposing facts and logic, as to warrant the hope of its speedy and complete discomfiture. The so-called higher criticism is

¹ Inspiration of the Old Testament, by Alfred Cave, B. A., p. 15.

to-day in a thoroughly discredited condition.

The Church of Christ had for centuries so fully accepted the Old Testament as the inspired word of God that, in a sense of security, it had ceased carefully to study the problems which are involved in its literature. This was largely the case even with ministers. When, therefore, the rationalistic attack on its integrity, which had been long in preparation, was made, many in the Church found themselves so utterly unprepared to meet it that they at once capitulated with the enemy. The situation, however, does not require capitulation, but an examination of our sure defenses and a refurbishing of our weapons of defense to resist the assault.

The exigencies of the Church now demand that the rising ministry be qualified to restore and propogate that true knowledge of these Old Scriptures which, with the blessing of the Holy Spirit, shall convince men that they are indeed the truthful word of God on which they can rest with entire certainty. In conjunction with my fellow professors, it will be my aim to maintain the integrity of the whole Bible, and to train a ministry qualified to proclaim it to a lost world as the word of God.

My theme, then, this evening will be, "The Old Testament in the Light of Modern Scholarship." Let me remind you at the outset that rationalistic critics are not the only Biblical scholars worth hearing. There is a large number of scholars, easily the peers of these critics, who differ from them, and whose conclusions, because reached from a wider field of induction, are entitled to more favorable consideration. In the broad light of modern scholarship we confidently affirm of the Old Testament Scriptures—

I. *Their historic verity.* It is true that they do not give us a systematic treatise on either history or science. What they say, however, in these departments is invariably correct. It will be admitted that the Old Testament not only claims to speak truth, but that the spirit of truthfulness pervades the whole of it. An air of veracity

invests it from beginning to end.

The higher critics impeach its historical and scientific accuracy, and affirm that the earliest books particularly are full of myths and legends. But they have reached this conclusion on the narrow basis of a minute literary analysis and nice distinctions in words, style and modes of thought of a dead oriental language, as found in the Old Testament, without outside comparison. Such a mode of reasoning is extremely unreliable, even in a living Western language, where we have the largest opportunity for comparison. It is of a piece with the assertion of a German scholar, that, without ever having seen it, he could give a correct description of the river Rhine from examining a few specimens of flowers and stones which had been brought to him from its banks. No certain results can be reached by such a method.

Then also, the view of the destructive critics antagonizes the unanimous belief of centuries. The great Hebrew scholars of antiquity, who were men conspicuous for their integrity, and who thoroughly understood the customs of their people and their peculiarities of thought and speech when the language was still a living one, testify to the full integrity of these Scriptures. The conclusion of the critics must therefore be discounted for the double reason that they are at best but imperfectly acquainted with their material, and that their induction is from an altogether too narrow array of facts.

Blinded by his theory, the higher critic lacks impartiality no less than exhaustiveness. He does not avail himself of all accessible sources of information, and is in the habit of distorting unwelcome facts. Defective in historical insight, he has lost the power to estimate the reality of history. His philosophy leads him to idealize history, and to conceive of historic facts as manufactured to suit the theory. Many of the higher critics go so far as to charge fraud and conspiracy on the writers of the Old Testament. On this theory nothing whatever can be determined in respect to the past. But, a theory which

makes a stupendous absurdity of all history condemn itself.

Not only has a deeper study of the Scripture resulted in confounding the destructive critics on their own chosen line of investigation, but a multitude of new witnesses has come to the front to confirm the truth of God's Word. Learned men have had their attention directed to the Orient. The historian, the surveyor, the geologist, the botanist, the zoologist, the meteorologist, the archaeologist, and men in other departments of science, have prosecuted their researches in Bible lands, and have accumulated volumes of testimony to corroborate the writings of Moses and the prophets.

It is the glory of this last half of the 19th century that God is giving the world a secondary revelation to confirm his first great revelation in the written word. The records of those Eastern nations, who more than once aimed to destroy the Hebrews, have suddenly been recovered by the spade of the explorer and the patient skill of the decipherer to declare the truthfulness of their Scriptures.

We are permitted to see again that ancient world as it was when God called Abraham from Ur to Canaan, when Israel were slaves in Egypt, when Moses conducted them through the wilderness and gave them laws at Sinai, when Joshua led them into the Promised Land, when David sang his sacred lyrics, when Daniel prophesied in Babylon, and when Ezra and Nehemiah built the second temple. The earth has opened her mouth. The very stones are crying out. Sculptured monuments, engraved monoliths, clay tablets, baked bricks, ciphered cylinders, pottery, coins and jewelry unearthed at Babylon, Assyria, Persia, Arabia, Palestine and Egypt, come forth to bear their testimony. Buried cities, great libraries, the treasure houses of ancient kings have been brought to light, and, with them, lost languages and old records, all of which proclaim the historic verity of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Until very recently rationalistic critics contended

that the art of writing was unknown until centuries after the Mosaic age, and that therefore Moses could not possibly have written the Pentateuch. But excavations made at Tel-el-Amarna and Lachisch, at Nineveh and in Arabia reveal the fact that writing was understood centuries before Abraham's day, and that the age of Moses was one of extensive learning and of the highest literary activity¹. Records come to us from near the time of the Deluge, which makes it possible that the account which we have in Genesis of that great catastrophe is that of an eye-witness.

From East to West letters were going to and fro. They wrote books on burnt clay and preserved them in libraries. In the midst of all this learning, of libraries and schools, it is impossible that the Hebrews, with their intense mental activity, should have remained a barbarous people. The house of bondage had also been the school of their enlightenment.

Moses, equipped with the best education which the foremost nation of that time afforded, being a man of wide experience and of great mental and moral resources, and having, too, at his command the gathered lore of all the nations, was precisely the one man who was well qualified to write a book like the Pentateuch. In view of all that he was and did, and of the opportunities which we now know he possessed, it would have been simply marvellous if he had not written some document of the kind. Why should all other nations keep a record of their important laws and events, and not the Hebrews?

Obviously, it was part of Moses' work to mould the Hebrew people into a strong, united nation, and inspire them with hope and courage for the great task which confronted them. What could be better adapted to that end than the book of Genesis, which traces their glorious lineage, and reminds them of their high position, as the chosen people of Jehovah, to whom all the promises were made? and what more natural, therefore, than that Moses

¹ Recent Research in Bible Lands, pp. 116, 117.

should write it? For forty years he had dwelt in Arabia, which had for centuries been, and was at that time, the center of great literary activity, and where circulated freely that Babylonian literature which gave an account of the most important events of the world from the creation down.

Moses, therefore, had the qualification and all the needed material for writing the book of Genesis. There is strong evidence to show that it could not have been written later than his time. We have a high degree of probability, therefore, that the Scriptures in assigning it to that age and author are entirely correct. It was the summons of Moses to Israel to separate themselves to Jehovah, and his introduction to the other four books of the Pentateuch. All the latest discoveries in Bible lands add strong confirmation to this Scripture claim.

But the historic verity of the Old Testament will appear to better advantage by instancing a number of particulars.

The primitive history of Genesis, which narrates events of what may be called pre-historic times, is in striking accord not only with the universal traditions of the ethnic faiths, but also with the historic and scientific facts which the most recent Oriental research has brought to light.

The record of creation in Genesis was long regarded as hopelessly at variance with natural facts. But the ethnic traditions, of which we have the best specimen on the Chaldean tablets, essentially agree with Genesis. The chaotic condition of the earth previous to the creative days, the order of creation, the introduction of light, vegetation and animal life, the preparation of the earth for man, and then his creation, as pictured on the tablets, give us a cosmogony which is in close agreement with the Hebrew record. They also agree with Genesis in making the Sabbath a primitive instead of a Jewish institution.

Science now also affirms the creation record of Genesis to be correct. Says Professor Dawson: "We have

here a consistent scheme of the development of the solar system, and especially of the earth, agreeing in the main with the results of modern astronomy and geology. It would not be easy now to construct a statement of the development of the world in popular terms so concise and accurate."¹ Such eminent scientists as LaPlace, Guyot and Dana hold similar views. Professor Dana says, that from a purely scientific point of view, the first chapter of Genesis is a true "epitome of creation in a few comprehensive annunciations."

The ethnic traditions agree also closely with Genesis in what it says of the edenic bliss of man, his fall into sin, and the serpent as connected with the origin of evil; while science credits Moses with the correct location of the garden of Eden, and with a true description of the character of the ante-diluvian man.²

Science also has its deluge which, Professor Dawson thinks, was of wider range than that intended by the writer of Genesis. Geology divides the human period into two parts by a submergence of the land which resulted in a terrible destruction of human and animal life. The geological deluge was once considered to have been much more ancient than that of Noah, but recent discoveries have tended greatly to strengthen the probability of their identity as to date. The inherent credibility of the Hebrew record has thus strong corroboration in natural facts.³

It is, moreover, in close accord with historical testimony. All the ethnic faiths have preserved the memory of this great catastrophe. It is the most universal of all "

1 Eden Lost and Won, p. 50.

2 Eden Lost and Won, p. 87.

3 Professor Dawson says: "This earliest human age is separated from the ordinary historic period, according to Genesis, by the Deluge of Noah, and according to Geology by the great post-glacial submergence which marks the division between Palaeolithic man with his contemporary animals, and the men and animals of the Neolithic age. . . . The two records agree in assuring us that this submergence was of short duration, and that it destroyed many of the wild animals and the greater part of the men of the period." Eden Lost and Won, p. 82. See also Modern Science in Bible Lands, pp. 233, 254.

traditions. They all tell of the destruction of the human race by a great flood, the preservation of one family in a boat, and the re-peopling of the earth by this family. The account of the Chaldean tablets bears to the record of Genesis a remarkably close resemblance. Archaeologists say that the Chaldean narrative, in its original form, antedates the days of Abraham, and pre-supposes the record of Genesis in its integrity. It agrees with both the so-called Elohistie and Jehovistic documents of the higher critics, and thus completely annihilates their documentary hypothesis. The record did not originate centuries after Moses, but existed in its entirety, as its form indicates, soon after the Deluge.

History and science point also to the correctness of the record of Genesis respecting the Dispersion at Babel, and agree with its view as to the original unity of the race and language of man.

The agreement of the ethnic faiths with Genesis is not the result of one copying from the other. It argues for an original account of actual events which they all possessed in common, each branch of the human family transmitting it in its own way, and of which we have the most ancient and correct form in Genesis. The fact that the ethnic traditions have nothing in common with Genesis after the Dispersion is proof that they did not copy from it. Had they drawn from it they would have made mention of subsequent events and persons. That Genesis did not copy after the ethnic faiths is sufficiently proved by its purity, simplicity and scientific accuracy.

Modern ethnologists continually find anticipations of their greatest discoveries in the 10th chapter of Genesis, in which we have a geographical chart of the nations of the earth and of their affinities. The triple division into which this ancient document distributes mankind, and the boundaries which it assigns to the different human families, are ascertained to be absolutely correct. "All modern research has vindicated its accuracy," says Dawson. Contrary to all previous opinion, the Chaldean inscriptions

have shown that Genesis is minutely accurate in assigning a Hamitic population to Babylon, and a Shemitic one to Assyria and Elam.¹ Karl Ritter, the eminent German ethnologist, says that "In geography, as well as in ethnography, no writings of antiquity are so corroborated by modern research as this passage in Genesis."²

The cuneiform inscriptions have made the 14th chapter of Genesis perfectly intelligible. The monuments record the names of Chedorlaomer and his allied kings, and confirm the fact that they invaded Palestine at the time indicated by Scripture chronology.³ The events recorded in that chapter, the customs and political relations assumed, truly picture the history of that time and of the countries involved. The names of places and of men have been identified, and the description of the nature of the country about the cities of the plain corresponds with ascertained natural facts. The age of the patriarchs has indeed been put in the full glare of history. Long before Abraham's day, Babylonians had migrated westward, their kings had made Canaan tributary to their crown, and, at the time of his migration, a Babylonian monarch claimed kingship over Palestine.⁴

Geographical survey and modern research have thrown a flood of light over all that portion of Old Testa-

1 Genesis 10:8,10,11.

2 Bibliotheca Sacra, 1874, p. 163.

3 Rawlinson says, "The monumental records of Babylonia bear marks of an irruption in the native line of kings, about the date which from Scripture we should assign to Chedorlaomer and point to Elymais (or Elam) as the country from which the irruption came. We have mention of a king, whose name is on good ground identified with Chedorlaomer, as paramount in Babylonia—a king apparently of Elamitic origin—and this monarch bears in the inscriptions the unusual and significant title of *APPA MARTA*, or Ravager of the West."—*Historical Evidences*, page 73.

4 "The conclusion is in accordance with what the inscriptions of Babylonia itself teach us. We learn from them that Babylonian conquerors had made their way to Palestine in the gray dawn of history, and, in the age of Abraham, a Babylonian monarch still calls himself king of the land of the Amorites, the name under which Syria and Palestine were then known. We could not desire a better confirmation of the truth of that Old Testament history which tells us how Abraham, the Chaldean, migrated to the West, how Babylonian princes ruled and warred in Canaan in the life-time of the patriarch, and how, at a later period, 'a goodly Babylonian garment' was among the spoils of Jericho."—Professor Sayce in "Recent Research in Bible Lands, p. 116.

ment history which extends from the patriarchal age to the settlement of Israel in the Promised Land.¹ The inscriptions show that we have in the Pentateuch and Joshua a faithful contemporaneous history. The history of Joseph and of Israel in Egypt is, to the minutest particular, true to Egyptian customs, laws and geography. The statement of Exodus, that God wrote the Decalogue with his own finger on tablets of stone, reflects a practice of the time. The Minean inscriptions show that that was then the customary way of writing in Arabia. Most of the steps of Israel in their march to liberty have been traced. The stations on the route of the Exodus have been identified. The boundaries as drawn in the book of Numbers are entirely correct. The numerous geographical particulars in Joshua are, one after another, receiving verification. In his "Tent Work in Palestine," Major Conder says, "Of all the long catalogue in Joshua, there is scarce a village, however insignificant, which does not retain its desolate heap of modern hovels, with Arab equivalents to the old names."²

The record of "the three-score cities," all of which "were fenced with high walls, gates and bars," in the small dominion of Og, king of Bashan, and which seemed so evidently mythical to the higher critics, is in harmony with the discoveries of modern research. A number of walled cities are still found there, and they bear witness

¹ Treating of the important bearing which this kind of work has in confirming the accuracy and trustworthiness of the Hebrew Scriptures, Professor Dawson says: "The authors of the report on the Sinai Survey make no pretension to be either critics or expositors of the Bible, and they are prepared to say what they see, independently of the consequences to any one. Hence it is most instructive to observe how, as they unsparingly sweep away old traditions and the conjectures of travellers and historians, ancient and modern, the original record stands in all its integrity, like the stones of some cromlech from which men have dug away the earth under which it has been buried."—"Modern Science in Bible Lands," p. 111.

² *Lex Mosalea*, p. 111.

"In tracing the boundaries of the tribes the surveyors found reason to look upon the book of Joshua as the Domesday Book of Palestine. The towns in a district are all mentioned together, and in such consecutive topographical order that many Scripture sites could be identified from this very circumstance. The tribal boundaries are shown to be almost entirely natural, namely, rivers, ravines, ridges, and the watershed lines of the country."—"Buried Cities and Bible Countries," p. 110.

to the correctness with which the Hebrew writer sketched the customs and numbers of that ancient people.

The Pentateuch alone contains the expression, "*the land of Canaan*." This the critics have pointed out as proof that the redactor of a late date fraudulently put it there with the pious intent of giving an air of antiquity to the document and of making it pass as a truthful account of God's dealing with his people. But the Egyptian tablets show that Canaan was the name given to Palestine at the time of the Exodus, and its presence in the Pentateuch therefore is proof of the authenticity of that document.

In enumerating the precious stones which were set in Aaron's breastplate, Moses named the "jasper," a word which the critics claimed to be derived from the Greeks. If that were so, it would raise a presumption in favor of the contention that the Pentateuch was not written until centuries after Moses. But the critics were again doomed to be discredited. An Egyptian inscription of the time of the Exodus contains the name, and proves that Moses, in using it, was strictly accurate.

Other parts of the Old Testament bear the same tests. The historical books are not a collection of haphazard writings, but trustworthy records of actual events. The history of the judges, of David, of Solomon, and of the whole line of kings, is authentic. No one can now separate David from the authorship of the psalms; and the inscriptions proclaim Daniel's book to be a contemporaneous Babylonian production.

The discrepancy, which was thought to be connected with the introduction of the name "*Pal*" in Scripture, as one of the Assyrian kings has been satisfactorily explained by the ascertained fact that *Pal* and *Tiglath-Pileser III* are identical, as might have been inferred from the accurate information contained in I Chronicles 5:26.

The same is true of the apparent discrepancy in the number of talents which were delivered by Hezekiah to Sennacharib. Hezekiah says he gave but three hundred,

while Sennacherib claims to have received eight hundred. But it has now been ascertained that, while the Hebrew and Assyrian gold talents were the same, three Hebrew silver talents were equivalent to eight Assyrian of that metal. Again the Old Hebrew Scripture is found to be strictly correct.

Until quite recently it was the universal scientific opinion that the Old Testament, in saying that, "*the coney cheweth the cud*" and that ants "*prepare their meat in summer*," convicted itself of scientific blunders. It was contended that no such conies and ants ever existed. But the latest verdict of science holds that the above statements respecting the habits of these animals are "in accordance with the accurately ascertained facts of natural history."¹ In allusion to this fact so authoritative an author as the late Mr. Romanes said of Scripture writers, "Our attention as naturalists is arrested by the accuracy of their observations."²

A careful comparison, therefore, of the Old Testament with the latest results in many fields of investigation reveals its pre-eminent truthfulness. It comes unscathed out of every test. The writers of these old Scriptures loom up as men of rare intelligence and accuracy. They are invariably true to their historical and geographical view-point. Whether they describe events which occurred in Egypt, the Arabian desert, Canaan or Babylon, they give in each case the ideas and aspects appropriate to the place and time. In all references to geographical land marks, names of places and persons, geological structure; physical features; the climate, flowers, animals and stones; the laws, customs and government of the people, they are uniformly correct. This marvellous accuracy extends even to the poetical books. Do we fully appreciate this wonderful fact? On an extensive comparison it becomes evident that the Scriptures are pre-eminent over all other literature ancient and modern, for their truth-

¹ Smith's Bible Dictionary, Edition of 1893.

² The Homiletic Review, January, 1896; p. 18.

fulness. This external proof of their accuracy is greatly strengthened by their internal coherence and the testimony which one part bears to the other.

The time is past when such documents can be stigmatized as a collection of old myths and fables. Their historic verity has been firmly established. "We possess an abundance of contemporary records which enable us to test the truthfulness and credibility of the narratives that the Old Testament has preserved. And the narratives fully stand the test."¹ Professor McCurdy has well said, "The stadium of needed vindication of the historical accuracy of the Old Testament is now as good as past in our progress towards the final goal of truth and knowledge."² These Scriptures are all authentic. They give evidence of coming from intelligent eye-witnesses. Everywhere they bear the stamp of contemporaneousness. Modern investigations in science and archeology are accumulating evidence that even the earliest portions on Genesis, with the exception of the unique record of the creation, contain the narratives of intelligent eye-witnesses which Moses utilized in their composition.³

1 Recent Research in Bible Lands, page 111.

2 Recent Research in Bible Lands, page 28.

3 Speaking of the tenth chapter of Genesis, Professor Dawson says, "I have already referred to the early date of this document, and the notes of an historical character interspersed, and which might be supposed to be later additions, all keep within the same limits. The writer never by any chance shows the least knowledge of the subsequent history of the peoples to whom he refers. It is scarcely possible to imagine a later writer persevering in such reticence." EDEN LOST AND WON, page 113. Respecting the record of the Deluge, he says, "It is also to be observed that the narrative in Genesis purports to be that of an eye-witness. He notes the going into the ark, the closing of its door, the first floating of the large ship, then its drifting, then the disappearance of visible land, and the minimum depth of fifteen cubits, probably representing the draft of water of the ark. Then we have the abating of the waters, with an intermittent action, 'going and returning,' the grounding of the ark, the gradual appearance of surrounding hills, the disappearance of the water, and, finally, the drying of the ground. All this, if historical in any degree, must consist of the notes of an eye-witness." MODERN SCIENCE, page 254.

To the same purport, in connection with what he had said before, are his remarks on the description of the site of Eden in Genesis: "We have, therefore, arrived, on infallible evidence furnished by geology, geography and history, at the conclusion that the original author of the document of which the second chapter of Genesis forms a portion, flourished somewhere between the time of the Deluge and that of the patriarch Abraham. This conclusion cannot now be shaken by any literary criticism, and is in every way likely to be further confirmed by new discoveries." EDEN LOST AND WON, page 76.

II. Secondly, THEIR SUPERNATURAL CONTENTS. Being a first-class authority in matters of common human knowledge, the question arises: Does the Old Testament also give reliable information in its narration of events which are strictly supernatural? Is human history trustworthy which purports to relate what God has said and done? Can man give a true account of divine action?

Rationalistic critics deny the possibility of supernatural intervention in human affairs, and when therefore records of it occur in the Scriptures, they put them in the category of myths and fancy sketches, which, in moral and didactic worth, stand on a level with such productions as Esop's Fables and the Tales of the Arabian Nights. The question, however, is not one of possibility, but of fact. Conceding the existence of a personal God, infinite in wisdom and power, and interested in the welfare of his creatures, all the supernatural events which are recorded in Scripture not only become possible but probable.

That God has revealed himself and worked miracles is the uniform testimony of the Old Testament. It abounds in statements like these: "Jehovah said unto Abraham," "Jehovah spake unto Joshua," "Jehovah said unto Samuel," "Jehovah sent them thunder and hail.* * * Jehovah rained hail upon the land of Egypt," "Jehovah your God dried the waters of Jordan from before you until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God dried up the Red Sea, which He dried up from before you until ye were gone over." The Old Testament professes to give a history in which God was present with his people, revealing himself to them in various ways, and accrediting that revelation of himself to them by miracle and prophecy.

The one supreme purpose of the Old Testament is confessedly to illustrate the teaching and working of God. The only question which concerns us is, Are these claims respecting itself true or not? The fact that the writers of the Old Testament have been so entirely correct in recording matters of common human knowledge raises a strong presumption in favor of their accuracy in claiming to

narrate superhuman events. They were in the highest degree under the control of the spirit of truth and had a reputation for the strictest moral integrity. The Scripture contains the supernatural element. It needs to be accounted for. Our contention is that it cannot be explained on natural principles, but that the testimony of the writers of Scripture in assigning it to divine agency must be accepted as true. The argument is too lengthy for full treatment here. A few points only can be mentioned.

1st. The truth contained in the record of creation is clearly a matter of revelation. Professor Hittcock said that its substantial truth "is generally admitted among all scientific men." How did the writer of Genesis obtain that true information. He was not a personal witness of the work of creation. God is the only being who knew all the facts in the case, and He must therefore have revealed them. The accurate record of creation therefore gives clear proof of Divine intervention. When it is seen to be true we know it to be divine.

2nd. The spiritual significance of Old Testament truth proves its spiritual origin.

1. The immaculate character with which it invests God is above human conception. He is not merely free from faults, but radiant in virtue, intensely active in all that is good. He cannot "look on iniquity;" "neither shall evil dwell with Him." How did the Old Testament writers come by this idea of God as a Being of ineffable holiness, infinitely pure, righteous and just? The gods of the ethnic faiths are hideously immoral. They are human creations. Man's views of God have invariably deteriorated. God only can give a true knowledge of himself, and the fact that the Old Testament presents God correctly as ineffably holy and infinite in goodness and truth is proof that He communicated this knowledge of himself to its authors.

2. The dark colors in which sin is portrayed, as that abominable thing which God hates and which deprives the best of men of all right of approach to Him, show it to be

a matter of revelation. None but a holy God could correctly estimate the damage done by transgressing his righteous law. The sinner is, by disposition and self-interest, wholly incapable of truly defining sin.

3. The Old Testament plan of the forgiveness of sin on the basis of a vicarious atonement is supernatural. The shedding of blood is made, not by the cost of the victim but by the will of God, the method of procuring pardon. This opens the door of hope for all sinners, and points forward to the sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world. This method of pardon is so deep and mysterious that, if God had not revealed it, man would never have thought of it. He has, by nature, always been in deadly hostility to it.

4. The spiritual aim and efficacy of the Old Testament bespeak a divine origin for its contents. It does more than repress evil or deter from crime. It "breathes a high moral earnestness, a pure and holy spirit." It makes the spiritual supreme, subordinating all earthly interests to it, inculcating high religious ideals, and pressing hard on the scrupulously conscientious. It seeks to make man right in all his earthly relations on the basis of having him right first of all with his God. The Lord commanded Moses to say to the people in his name, "If ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy might, and with all thy strength." A theory of conduct so lofty was never originated by mortal man.

Moreover, the Old Testament has a more than human insight into the deepest religious needs of man and has provided for them with a divine efficacy. It awakens the religious sense and satisfies it. Revealing to him his guilt and helplessness, it does not leave him to sink into despair but inspires him with hope by disclosing the loving-kindness of God on the basis of which forgiveness,

reconciliation and a new life are made possible. It quickens man's heart to repent, to have confidence in God, to forsake the evil and cleave to the good and, while filling the soul with divine peace, furnishes also a constant stimulus to aspire after higher degrees of holy living. The fruits of this discipline have been of the richest kind. It produced the holy men whose lives are mirrored in the Psalms and the Prophets. It made saints like Abraham, Samuel, David, Elijah, Isaiah and Daniel.

Whence came this Old Testament truth which anticipated man's wants so fully and satisfied them so completely? The only reasonable answer is that God revealed it for man's guidance.

Higher Criticism contends that the prophets preceded the law, and, in the course of centuries, gradually developed it. But how did the prophets come by their deep spiritual knowledge and their intense moral earnestness if they did not receive it from the quickening power of God's revealed truth in the law of Moses? The religious convictions, activity and experiences contained in the Psalms and Prophets can be adequately explained only on the previous knowledge of the Mosaic law which underlies the thought and life of the whole Old Testament. It is God's teaching and guiding to bring man out of sin to Himself. This view receives added strength from the obvious fact that the Old Testament sustains a *designed* relation to the Gospel. The law and Gospel make each other mutually intelligible, yet the one could not be inferred naturally from the other. The close connection between them is a miraculous one, and discloses a far-reaching plan of God.

That God has come to man and spoken to him are facts which are also attested by substantial miracles. A revelation cannot be delivered by anybody. It can only be by one whose mind has been divinely prepared to receive the message of God, and one whom He authenticates to men. Obviously it requires the supernatural credibly to authenticate the supernatural. Hence the need of miracles.

They are reasonable because necessary to accredit the agents through whom God made His revelations. They do not appear at random in all parts of the Old Testament, but only at crucial epochs as in the days of the patriarchs, Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Daniel, when the exigencies of God's kingdom required his especial interposition. They were the credentials of his ambassadors, authenticating the message which was delivered by them; and it is to be observed that these men always ascribed the miracles which were wrought through them to the power of God.

We have found them to be truthful historians, too intelligent and honest knowingly to record falsehood, and therefore the only way open to deny the reality of miracles is by impeaching the consciousness of these men and say that they were deceived. Is that possible? Shall we say that men like Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, yes, and Christ himself, were under illusion? This will finally bring us face to face with the alternative contained in Auberlin's question: "Is the world a lunatic asylum, or is it the temple of the living God? *Tertium non datur.*"¹ Right reason unites with Scripture in affirming that it is a temple of the living God.

3rd. Prophecy furnishes another line of evidence for the presence of the supernatural in the Old Testament. The prophet was one who spake for God. His message, whether it referred to the past, present or future, was divinely imparted to him. Prophecy in its predictive sense particularly discloses an understanding of the future which is possible to infinite wisdom only, and is therefore a miracle of knowledge.

Isaiah, for instance, in his 21st chapter, predicts the overthrow of Babylon by the Medo Persian power, giving a number of particulars whereby the prophecy can be identified. Some hundred and fifty years afterwards this prediction was literally fulfilled.

In the third chapter of Micah, the prophet foretells.

¹ The Divine Revelation, page 100.

the captivity of Judah more than a hundred years before it occurred.

The knowledge of the future is especially disclosed in the Messianic prophecies. The character, work and sufferings of Christ were minutely portrayed centuries before his advent. The 53rd chapter of Isaiah narrates a detailed arrangement in regard to the mediatorial work of Christ which, by its fulfillment more than six hundred years afterward, distinctly bears the stamp of a supernatural origin. The agreement of fulfillment with prediction is clear evidence of the fact that God spake through the prophet.

The types of the Old Testament, of which we have the antitype in the New, are evidence of the same truth. It is beyond human ingenuity to invent a type before the appearance of the antitype; and, since centuries intervened between the two, the correspondence of type in the Old Testament with the antitype in the New, is conclusive proof of divine plan and origin.

The supernatural in the Old Testament is therefore a reality. It is a demonstrated fact. It occurs throughout these Scriptures in well accredited forms of revelation, miracle, prophecy and type, and they are therefore shown to be reliable in their narration of supernatural, as well as in that of common events.

III. Finally, *their plenary inspiration*. By inspiration we mean that special divine influence on the human mind which secures the accurate transmission of truth, by speaker or writer, whether that truth has been divinely revealed or obtained through the ordinary channels of human observation and experience; while revelation has reference to that direct Divine influence by which the truth of God is imparted to man.

As it relates to the Old Testament, we say that the writings of it are fully inspired of God, so that, while not excluding but including the human activity, they are in a true sense the word of God. The writings contain the divine and human elements in combination, the divine

controlling the human to the extent of securing truthfulness. "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."

It might be taken for granted that, since God intended the Scriptures to be a permanent and authoritative record of his revealed word, in which men might always trust with assured certainty, He would give that special help to the sacred writers which, in embodying this truth in a permanent written form, would keep them free from all the errors and follies, the faults and failings, which mar the best of human literature. The exigencies, which made revealed truth a necessity, demanded with equal urgency that it should be accurately communicated under special Divine superintendence to assure men of the fact that the record conveyed a veritable message from God. The writing needed something extraordinary in order that it might be invested with that peculiar authority which should elicit the confidence of men in its divine revelation. Truth divinely imparted to the mind, but transmitted in a fallible human record, would not answer the purpose, nor does that conception of Scripture comport with all the phenomena which it exhibits.

1. For one thing, in a large part of Scripture, history and revelation, natural facts and events and supernatural truths and agencies, are so inextricably interwoven in the text of Scripture, that it is impossible to separate them. The divine and human are in living union.

We have an instance of this in the record of creation. Its scientific accuracy is proof not only of its divine origin but of its inspiration as well. Words are used with unflinching accuracy. In regard to the origin of things, it introduces the two ideas of causation and developement with scientific precision. The primary existence of matter, of life and of man it ascribes to God, the first great Cause of all things, and, in respect to them, uses the strong verb "bara," create, which expresses the most absolute kind of making; while in reference to the idea of developement the milder term "asa," is employed. Sir William Dawson

asks, "How did this ancient writer escape the mental confusion which clouds the minds of so many clever men of our time?" They escaped it by means of the supernatural illumination and help which they enjoyed. "By proving the record to be true," says Professor Dana, "science pronounces it divine; for who could have correctly narrated the secrets of eternity but God himself?"¹

The same is true of the Law, Prophecy and Type. They are inseparably bound up with the history in which they appear. Most of them were confessedly given in the words of God; and, in respect to all of them, it is to be said that the truth which they convey is so far above the unaided powers of the human mind that man could never have expressed it correctly in language. These parts of Scripture are adequately explained only by saying, "God spake all these words."

This view is greatly strengthened by the consideration that through all these Scriptures there runs a remarkable unity of plan and purpose to which all their parts, great and small, are subordinated. And when we remember that these old documents were the product of many writers, differently qualified and living in different lands and centuries, between whom collusion was impossible, it must be apparent that we can account for this unity on no other view than that these authors wrote according to the mind of the one superintending Spirit of God.

2. The historical and scientific accuracy of Scripture predicate its plenary inspiration. Human memory may be trusted in a general way, but not in respect to minute exactness in so many details.

History and science have severely tested the Old Testament Scriptures at numerous points. Their latest discoveries have failed to overthrow them in a single point, but have confirmed them in many with striking exactness. Wherever there is opportunity for fair comparison, minute accuracy is shown to be their unique excellence. No fact in Scripture is more remarkable

¹ *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1878, p. 342.

than this. The Bible is, in this respect, THE BOOK, pre-eminent over all others in point of veracity. This supreme excellence of the Bible is a fact which must be taken into consideration in the effort to determine its origin. Why is it that truth is stamped on the very warp and woof of this book? You may take the productions of the most accomplished writers of history and science in our day, and, without difficulty, discover numerous errors in every one of them. Yet the Old Testament, which was composed in an unscientific age, when the art of writing was in its comparative infancy, making statements on a large variety of subjects, often incidentally only, is found invariably to be strictly correct. How could these men write true science before the birth of science? How could they so uniformly connote natural, geographical and ethnological facts with absolute correctness before any of these sciences were systematized? It is due to the inspiration of God. They were divinely helped.¹

The fact that these Scriptures were not the product of one, but of many, human authors, during sixteen centuries, makes this phenomenon still more remarkable. We do not believe that any one man ever possessed a genius so great or endowments so extraordinary that he could naturally have written with such uniform truthfulness, but the marvel is vastly enhanced and the explanation proportionately more difficult on the basis of many writers. Can there be any other satisfactory explanation than that these authors of Scripture were guarded against

1 "If the Bible is thoroughly true and reliable (not taking into account mere copyists' errors), then, making allowance only for such imperfect statements of the truth or such imperfect commands as were required by the condition of the men to whom it was given we have before us this prodigy, that during the lapse of many centuries a number of writers, of different personal character and of every variety of culture and position, writing with such freedom that their idiosyncrasies are plainly to be seen, and unhesitatingly touching upon every subject that came in their way—historical, ethnological, archaeological, scientific, and moral—have been preserved from error. This result could not have had place in writings of human origin. Is there any other logical conclusion from this, than that, whatever else be or be not the function of inspiration, its scope included the preservation of the Bible from error, and the giving to man of a book on which he may rely absolutely as the word of God?" Professor Frederick Gardner in "Aids to Scripture Study," page 62.

error and quickened to write truth by the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of the Scriptures?

The conclusion thus reached is all the more irresistible when we stop to consider, what is everywhere apparent in the Scripture, that this accuracy was not the result of plan and study on the part of its writers. They were seemingly unconscious of it. Their minds were supremely engaged with the import of the great truths which God was communicating through them. There come out of these Scriptures therefore, a unity, harmony and truthfulness which did not lie in the consciousness of their authors, and they must, for this added reason, be ascribed to the superintendence of the Divine Spirit.

We see then that the plenary inspiration of the Old Testament may be predicated from a careful induction of all the facts and truths which are found in its own pages.

3 This doctrine, thus established, is further confirmed by the testimony of the New Testament. It is sometimes contended that we cannot prove the inspiration of Scripture by its own testimony; but the two Testaments are separated from each other by centuries, and, as witnesses, they are therefore independent of each other. It would be entirely proper to formulate a doctrine respecting the Old Testament from expressions concerning it in the New. But when the New Testament corroborates a doctrine which lies embedded in the Old, its testimony must be accepted as final and conclusive.

In respect to the Old Testament Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God," or, is God-breathed. True, this is the only explicit statement of the New Testament on the subject; but, since what it here categorically affirms is necessarily to be inferred from all its references to the Old, the declaration of Paul fairly voices its view respecting the Old Testament. The New Testament teaches therefore that the entire Old Testament is inspired of God.

It also expresses the opinion of Christ himself. In his view, God was the Author of it, and for that reason,

He held it to be absolutely true and reliable. What it said, He regarded as having been said by God and the Holy Spirit, and therefore ever proved by these Scriptures what the will of God was. The words of the Old Testament were to Him co-extensive with the words of God. "It is written," was, in his view, equivalent to "Thus saith the Lord." He quoted incidental passages of Scripture as conclusive in argument. The Scripture was the only authority to which He deferred, and He deferred to it in the minutest points.

Jesus then affirmed an inspiration for the Old Testament which was of the most plenary kind. His competence and qualification for teaching the true doctrine of Scripture must be admitted. He came to give to the world the final revelation of divine truth, and his clear statement, therefore, on any doctrine, must be the end of all controversy among His people.

He solemnly affirmed, "My teaching is not mine, but his that sent me." He spake not from himself but according to the Father's commandment. In speaking to the Father of His finished work, he said, "I have given them Thy word," and make the reception of his message the test of true discipleship in these words: "Now they know that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are from Thee: for the words which Thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and know of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send me."

We still have the Old Testament then in its full integrity, and, with it also, the New, of which it is the foundation. God is still speaking to men in its holy lessons, its sacred history, its divine institutions, its devout psalms and inspired prophecy, for comfort in life's lessons, for the confirmation of faith, and for guidance into the full knowledge of New Testament truth.

These scriptures are the word of God, true from beginning to end. They have been tested and proved. Assailed by powers numerous and mighty, they stand firm

as the impregnable rock of eternal truth. Their truthfulness is authenticated by the light which streams from their own pages and is corroborated by miracle and prophecy, by modern research, and by the testimony of our Lord and his Apostles.

The neglect of the study of the Old Testament was avenging itself in the helplessness of the Church to ward off hostile attacks made upon it. But God is wonderfully confirming its verity by means of the discoveries made in a wide range of scholarly investigations.

It is now seen that a rationalistic criticism had accepted mere conjecture for knowledge, and had reached conclusions antagonistic to the veracity of Scripture on the basis of an unsound deduction. Signs are multiplying which indicate that the rationalistic criticism is approaching its Waterloo.

But the corrective for these erroneous views will be found in a deeper study of the Scriptures in the light of all the evidence which God is accumulating for their defense. Being the word of God, the Bible shrinks from no test, it welcomes light from every source, and desires above all things to be searched and tested that it may commend itself to the faith of men. We honestly receive and teach this Old Testament for the reason that it is God's truthful word which, in union with the New, lightens up the way of life with unfailing certainty. Other books come and go, empires rise and decay, but the word of God is invested with the vigor of immortal youth and abides forever.

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